

California, 2010

Background

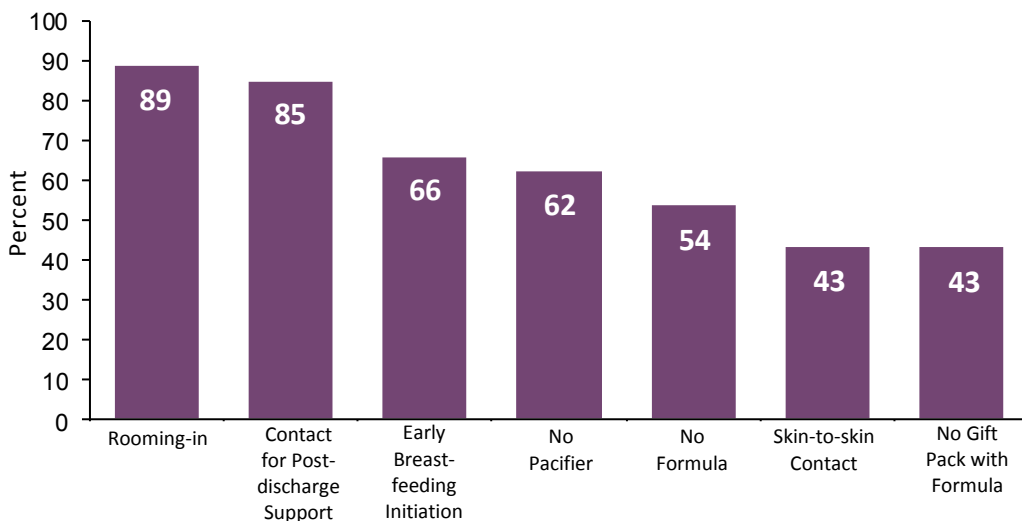
Hospital practices influence infant feeding behaviors during a period critical for successful breastfeeding. Evidence-based maternity care policies and practices, such as the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative’s “Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding,” promote breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity. Establishing maternity care policies and practices that support breastfeeding as a standard of care in California hospitals will help meet *Healthy People 2020* goals and improve overall maternal and child health.

The California Maternal and Infant Health Assessment (MIHA) is a statewide-representative survey of women with a recent live birth that collects self-reported information about a variety of topics, including maternal experiences immediately after their delivery and infant feeding practices. This brief uses MIHA data to show the overall prevalence of hospital practices that support breastfeeding and their association with long-term breastfeeding behavior among mothers of healthy newborns (excludes premature, low birth weight, and twin births, and infants placed in the neonatal intensive care unit).

Key Messages

- Although the majority of California mothers report experiencing some hospital practices that support breastfeeding; few experience all seven practices.
- Mothers experiencing hospital practices that support breastfeeding were more likely to exclusively breastfeed at three months postpartum.
- Hospitals have a unique opportunity to protect, promote and support breastfeeding mothers and infants by providing evidence-based maternity care.

Percent of mothers reporting they experienced hospital practices supportive of breastfeeding, California 2010



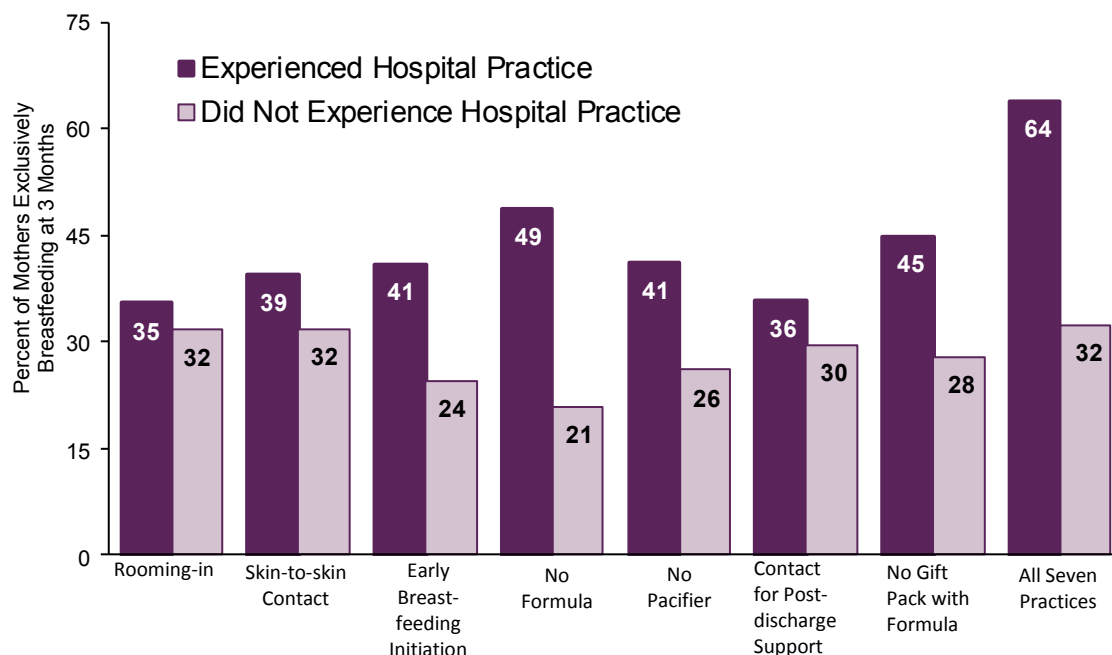
Only **10%**

of mothers report all seven practices



Mothers experiencing hospital practices that support breastfeeding were more likely to exclusively breastfeed their infants at three months postpartum

Percent of mothers exclusively breastfeeding at three months postpartum by hospital experiences, California 2010



Resources and Technical Assistance for Evidence-Based Maternity Care

Hospitals have a unique opportunity to protect, promote and support breastfeeding mothers and infants in the early postpartum period. The California Department of Public Health's Breastfeeding and Healthy Living web-site, cdph.ca.gov/Breastfeeding, has a variety of resources to assist hospitals to take action:

- **Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, USA** www.babyfriendlyusa.org
- **California Model Hospital Policies:** these policies list proven actions to increase in-hospital breastfeeding, an internet-based toolkit is available at: cdph.ca.gov/CAHospitalBFToolkit
- **Birth and Beyond California (BBC) Project:** utilizes quality improvement methods and staff training to implement evidence-based policies and practices, project materials available at: cdph.ca.gov/BBCProject
- **Regional Perinatal Programs of California:** locally available to assist hospitals in implementing evidence-based maternity care services, cdph.ca.gov/RPPC
- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC):** WIC breastfeeding liaisons and agencies provide breastfeeding support to hospitals and low-income women, cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks
- **In-Hospital Breastfeeding Data:** breastfeeding initiation rates using data collected by the Newborn Screening Program, cdph.ca.gov/breastfeedingdata
- **Maternity Practice in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC):** national survey of maternity care feeding practices and policies, www.cdc.gov/mpinc